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The Graduate College, Quads, Clubs  
and Fraternities in Princeton.

An ultimate analysis of  
Princeton's troubles  
and the Remedy  
therefor.

—BY—

ORVILLE S. BRUMBACK

PRINCETON '77



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**THE GRADUATE COLLEGE, QUADS, CLUBS  
AND FRATERNITIES IN PRINCETON.  
AN ULTIMATE ANALYSIS OF  
PRINCETON'S TROUBLES  
AND THE REMEDY  
THEREFOR.**

Like all other Princeton men, I have been intensely interested in the present controversy over Princeton affairs. When it was first announced that a million dollars in benefactions to our Alma Mater, offered by Wm. Cooper Proctor, '83, and other Princeton philanthopists, had been turned down, I was amazed, and have since been earnestly endeavoring to learn the reasons therefor. In that behalf I have read speeches, press articles and communications, with numerous pamphlets, that have been mailed to me by patriotic Princeton men seeking to unravel and straighten out the tangle. They have all come so far short of getting at what seems to me the root of the evil, that I am persuaded (with all due modesty) to air my views upon the situation.

**THE FACTS IN THE CASE.**

To intelligently and justly determine any matter in dispute, it is first necessary to obtain the exact facts in the case. I therefore announce the following, as facts that have contributed not only to bring about the present unfortunate controversy over the graduate college, but have handicapped Princeton for decades, and precipitated repeated controversies to her untold misfortune and damage, viz:

1. In the early seventies, Princeton inaugurated the restrictive policy (unknown to any other *large* educational institution in the world) of requiring her students to pledge themselves not to join a college fraternity.

2. This policy has been since adhered to, and thereby Princeton men have been deprived of whatever advantages college fraternities afford in college and out of college.

3. The main reason adduced for this encroachment upon individual rights has been that college fraternities would detract from the interest in, and work of, Whig and Clio halls (literary societies).

4. In the absence of fraternity associations in Princeton, the present club system was inaugurated in the early eighties.

5. The present clubs militate against Whig and Clio halls fully as much if not more than fraternities would do.

6. The so-called Quad system was proposed, and is still being considered as a remedy for the claimed evils of the clubs.

7. The controversy over the Graduate College has grown out of the controversy over the Quad system.

No one will question the foregoing facts, and I assert they point directly to the fraternity restrictions as the cause of all the dissensions that have distracted Princeton ever since they were adopted, curtailing her growth and blighting her influence. Before proceeding to argue the short-sighted character of the fraternity restrictions, and the causal connection between them and the trouble and dissension that have destroyed Princeton solidarity, I affirm the following:

## POSTULATES TO THE FOREGOING FACTS.

1. Man as a social being always has sought, and always will seek, congenial spirits with whom to associate in his daily life.

2. These associates will be those of congenial dispositions, and tend to be those of a like position and condition in life.

3. Such associations are the most enjoyable part of life outside of the family relation, and often are the means by which success in life is attained.

4. You cannot promiscuously herd men together in daily life. They will as naturally segregate themselves into congenial groups as they do into the family relations.

5. Any attempt to form a socialistic group of men upon any other basis than that of natural selection, while ideal in theory, is as much doomed to failure in the college world as it is in the world at large.

## NOW FOR THE ARGUMENT

A college course is for the sole purpose of equipping young men to succeed in after life. The college world therefore is, or should be, largely a world in miniature, where in addition to the book learning acquired, a young man may acquire a knowledge of the means by which men are swayed, influenced and controlled. In other words, by which success is attained.

The outside world is a world of struggle and competition in its every phase, social, commercial and intellectual. It is a place where men and combinations of men of different classes, nationalities and associations, meet, mingle and clash. It is not a place where the ideals of the socialist are practical, viz.: where men can all associate and mingle upon a common equal basis.

How then can an attempt in the college miniature world be successful that attempts to accomplish such a result by a Quad or any other system? Even if successful in college, it would certainly illy equip for the struggle in the world after leaving College.

## THE PRINCETON CLUBS.

The evil Dr. Wilson has depicted of the bitter disappointment in the heart of the young man who fails to make one of the present social clubs in Princeton is a tangible evil, and this being admitted, what is the remedy, for surely there is a remedy.

To start with, no young man can be entirely shielded from disappointment and heart burning in college, any more than he can be out of college. They are the inseparable incidents of success and failure in life. But while he cannot be shielded from such conditions, *he can be given an equal chance in the struggle to attain success* and thereby avoid many disappointments. And herein lies the remedy, not in a Quad system, nor in the form or location of graduate or other college buildings. The present club system in Princeton is clearly and undoubtedly the result of the exclusion of college fraternities from the institution. They are the spontaneous outgrowth of the above postulates—of the natural and inherent tendency of congenial spirits to associate with each other. No one would say if this want had been supplied by fraternities in Princeton, the clubs would ever have been formed.

## THE NATIONAL FRATERNITIES.

But it is asked, if National Fraternities, with their houses like the club houses, were in Princeton wherein would be the difference from the clubs?

The answer is one of degree. If the fraternities were there, instead of eight or ten clubs *there would probably be thirty*, like there are at Cornell and other large colleges, *with full opportunity to form more as fast as the demand arose therefor* by those desiring such associations. Nor would the formation and financing of fraternities and their houses be restricted to Princeton resources, but the national fraternities, financially strong as they are, would step in and lend assistance. This is being done all over the college world. The Sigma Chi Fraternity, which I joined before entering Princeton, has an Endowment Fund (of which I have the honor of being one of the Trustees) that is devoted to building Chapter Houses by loans at low rates of interest to chapters in colleges where assistance is needed. In this way the "*heart-burning*" is being lessened all over the college world *except at Princeton*. Not only lessened, but college men are thereby afforded full opportunity to meet and organize for experience, and compete for success in college associations the same as they must do after they leave college.

### FRATERNITIES AFFORD VALUABLE EXPERIENCE.

In other colleges the bars are down for the best man and the best organized set of men to win the palms of success; and the struggle to "make good" and to secure desirable men for the membership of the different fraternities, is both an inspiration and an education for all engaged in it. It means enthusiastic training in all that goes to sway and influence men, as well as experience in individual and "team play" to attain that result.

As well said by President Wilson, in his late Pittsburgh address:

“What does the country expect of Princeton? It expects of Princeton what it expects of every other college, the accommodation of its life to the life of the country.” *That is training in human nature as well as in books.*

Who will not say such a practical training in college is much better than to cast a college graduate out into the world without such experience. I am frank to say that my experience in connection with fraternity work in college (not Princeton) has been of more practical use and benefit to me than any other part of my college training.

It is practical knowledge of human nature, that makes for later success. If not, why is it so many of our valedictorians and best students cut such a sorry figure in the world while some of the mediocre students who were hustling “good fellows” in college mount high on the ladder. Is it not because they learned in college the secret of dealing with and swaying their fellow men? No other solution is tenable.

It was the lack and need of practical training in the college world as well as the social instinct, that gave birth to American college fraternities; they afford the experience in the sharp competition of men “bumping up against” men. Nor are they only of benefit to men in college, but are eminently so to men out of college. In this age of association and combination one cannot have too many influences to “*push him along.*” To my personal knowledge many men have been “made” by their college fraternity connections. College associations formed when men are young and impressionable last through life, and thousands of men per consequence will do more for a college fraternity brother than because of any other association in life. Consider what this means to a young man leaving college. He is liable to drift to

any distant locality. His college fraternity brother is there to welcome, introduce and aid him. Note how strong the spirit is even in the Princeton local clubs for their members to help each other, and think what this must be in national organizations of similar character.

## FRATERNITIES BENEFIT THEIR MEMBERS.

But to my mind a stronger argument in favor of the fraternity system, *is the bond it forms between the men in college and those out of college*. Being intimately associated with the three colleges that I attended in my literary and professional studies, and a frequent visitor at many others, I have had an unusual opportunity to observe this phase. Whenever I go to a college where my fraternity has a chapter, by putting on my badge and making myself known, I am immediately recognized, *greeted, introduced and entertained*. In fact, taken right in and made at home by the young men.

Three years ago, I attended the 30th Reunion of my class at Princeton. No fraternity brothers were there to greet and welcome me, and not being acquainted in the undergraduate world there was no bond of sympathy or acquaintance between us. The contrast between Princeton and other colleges in this respect is *deplorable* to one who has had experience.

Prof. Alfred H. Upham says in his book entitled "Old Miami":

"In the college community there is particular need for these limited brotherhoods. *A fellow can't intimately fellowship a whole school*, and there have to be the chosen few whose hearts thump in unison with his. To these alone he goes with the hopeless problem in algebra or the perfectly bully note from the girl with the brown eyes; these only are permitted to loan him money when dad's allowance is all spent, or to share

the luscious box of "eats" that mother always sends on birthdays. A heartless world may scoff, or bone-headed reporters write scathing sarcasm of the "Rah-rah boys from the Eata Bitea Pie crowd." But somehow *there's nowhere else in college life where real youth—red-blooded, sizzling, affectionate youth—gets expression so adequately as in the comradeship of fraternity halls.*"

### **FRATERNITIES BENEFIT A COLLEGE.**

Nor is it true (as has been claimed) that the fraternity or club destroys the college spirit. The student body is as loyal to the college in fraternity colleges like Michigan, Cornell, Columbia or Yale as at Princeton. If anything, college fraternities intensify college spirit, because men are more closely associated, congenial and happy, where they are than where they are not, and this engenders affection for all the college surroundings.

Mr. George Ade, the popular play-writer, says, in a contribution to the May 1910 number of *The Sigma Chi Quarterly*:

"The fraternity chapter house is a center of influence that will certainly be helpful, not only to a certain number of young men bearing a Greek-letter label, but to the university as well. It is a rallying point for alumni. It brings ex-students back to the campus and keeps alive their interest in university affairs. A loyal body of alumni is the bulwark of any great institution of learning.

"I insist that a college man may live on terms of democratic equality with all of his fellow-students, and still be a member of a small and compact organization bearing the same relation to the university that a family does to the community at large. He cannot find co-operation and helpfulness and close friendship by any



rambling association with two thousand men. The chance affiliations of a boarding house have no permanency."

Again, a great and important advantage of the best form of college fraternity is in bringing the men of different college classes together. The advantage of the Freshman and Sophomore being brought into intimate daily association with the Junior and Senior need not be argued. It discourages class antagonism and benefits all concerned. The class fraternity system at Yale and club system in Princeton is most unfortunate in this regard, and tends to a snobbery that is not found in colleges where the fraternities initiate their men from all the classes.

### PRINCETON'S GREAT MISTAKE.

The truth about this whole matter is, it was a false and mistaken policy that barred fraternities from Princeton, in the beginning, and has done more to impede her growth and progress than all other causes combined.

President Wilson made another statement in his Pittsburg address which is most *apropos* in this connection, when he said (matter in brackets my own) :

"We are (and long have been) in the presence of a very considerable risk, because we subject the plans of Princeton to standards of judgment limited to a single college family."

College fraternities have come to stay, and Princeton can illy afford to stand alone in isolation from them. There are over 175,000 college fraternity men in the United States, most of whom realize the benefits to be derived from college fraternities, and want their sons to go to a college where they can join one. In their choice of a college Princeton for this reason is at once elimi-

nated. I personally know of many such cases. Is it any wonder the Princeton Freshman class does not grow in number and quality as many desire?

The exclusion policy has succeeded in keeping men away from Princeton, and debarring her sons from the many advantages to be derived from national fraternity associations. And it has succeeded in building up a social club system in Princeton much more objectionable than a fraternity system.

After all these years of effort to keep down the social instinct in Princeton and ignominious failure so to do, what would be the hope from a Quad system? As Dr. Van Dyke well said: "It would be likely to produce first social confusion, and then social stratification."

The Quads would certainly alienate the friends and members of the Clubs, and they too would turn to other colleges for their sons rather than attempt the perilous experiment of placing them under what Dr. Van Dyke aptly describes as "*A system of restraint, which impairs self-reliance, and deprives their college life of that freedom which is part of the higher education.*" And I will add, a system of social paternalism that is antagonistic to every instinct of a free American.

Of course, all this applies with equal force to that system of restraint, which by an anti-fraternity pledge, deprives Princeton men of "that freedom which is part of the higher education."

Much more could be said of the advantages that accrue from national fraternities and the evils attending their exclusion, but space forbids. Sufficient has been adduced to make it clear that—

### ONLY ONE REMEDY

Can place Princeton where she belongs and eliminate her dissensions; and that is to follow the same

principle in college that obtains out of college, viz.: allow every man full and unrestricted freedom to choose and act in all affairs of life, as long as he does not injuriously exercise the right. That is a platform broad enough for trustees, faculty, alumni and students alike, to stand upon. It is the solution of all our troubles. It simply means to let the boys form every manner of club or society under a wise oversight of the faculty, with the distinct understanding that *whenever a social club becomes a source of evil temptation or wrong-doing, it shall forfeit its right to exist.*

Under such a system with firm and dignified regulation and control, all social organizations in Princeton can be made "to pull for Princeton" as well as for the pleasure and profit of their members.

Princeton with her splendid location and equipment will attract the flower of the youth of the land to her doors in ever increasing numbers, *if she will adopt a liberal "open door" policy instead of a narrow policy of restriction and exclusion.* In that behalf the anti-fraternity pledge should be revoked, and the present clubs permitted to join national fraternities and take part in their national councils and conventions. Surely a most desirable thing, for it would widen the acquaintance and experience of the men and greatly advertise the university. Then the formation of new fraternity chapters should be encouraged, together with the construction of the necessary houses therefor, *until ample opportunity is afforded to all to become members who desire to do so.*

And finally the Graduate College buildings should be located (grouped) wherever architecturally desirable, and most convenient for the students who are to use them. The social life therein will regulate itself (the same as in the other dormitories) when graduate students, like students in the professional schools of other

colleges, are free to join fraternities, or organize new ones of their own.

## IN CONCLUSION.

With numerous fraternities thus free to take their members from all classes, and departments, in the university, and required to conduct their affairs in a clean, manly, moral manner, the Princeton fraternities, with their numerous and attractive quarters for both students and alumni, *all managed by the students themselves*, would become a just source of pride and benefit to the university, students and alumni alike. When this is accomplished, and not until it is accomplished, will Princeton's social problems be happily solved, and her turmoil and dissension come to an end.

Princeton has become *a university*, and to succeed as such must rise above narrow prejudice and deal with the social life of her students in the same way that the world and all other leading universities deal with the problem, viz: by allowing every person the free and unrestricted right to choose his own associations so long as they are not of an immoral or evil tendency. For Princeton to arbitrarily herd her students, or pledge them in their associations, is of the same narrow character as for a government to undertake to dictate or restrict the religious associations of its people. The world has long since learned the evil of such infringements upon individual liberty, and it is remarkable that Princeton has so long ignored the lesson. She is certainly reaping the fruit of her error, and will continue to do so as long as she follows a policy so utterly at variance with the spirit and progress of the age.

ORVILLE S. BRUMBACK.

Wooster and Princeton '77, Michigan Law '79.

P. S. Since the above was placed in print, the will of a loyal son of Princeton, Isaac C. Wyman '48, has been made public, making the princely bequest of ten million dollars to the Graduate College. This renders it more imperative than ever that Princeton remove any and all restrictions that will tend to keep men from seeking her classic shades. Ten million dollars will provide magnificent buildings. The next thing is the post-graduate students to fill them.

Dr. Wilson in his April speech in New York said:

"Graduate students are mature men; they are looking around for what they want; and they will not take anything else. As a business proposition, therefore, I want to lay this consideration before you; after we get a body of graduate students we can do what we please with them, but we must get them first. *And we must get them on their own terms, for the best of all reasons—that they will not come on any other.*"

A great proportion of college men desiring to take a post-graduate course are members of college fraternities, and will naturally go where their fraternity associations afford them an entree and acquaintance in their new surroundings. As free Americans they will object to pledging themselves to any surrender of their freedom to control their rightful social relations, just as Ex-President Roosevelt objected to being controlled by the advisors of the Pope.

The sum total of the situation is that Princeton has indeed a brilliant future before her, if she will eliminate prejudice and deal with her students as young men (not adolescents) worthy of trust and confidence in every college relation.

Toledo, Ohio, May 30, 1910.

O. S. BRUMBACK.











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